

Food Safety for Infants

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Be Sure Your Infant Avoids these Foods:

Potential choking hazards:

- Hot dogs, grapes, whole olives, raw carrots, meat chunks, candy, grapes, raisins, cherry tomatoes, frozen cut green beans, celery, whole nuts*, popcorn and peanut butter*.
- Caution with foods that are similar in size or shape to grapes or green beans. If you're unsure of the safety of a food's size, cut it.
- Do not leave your child alone while eating snacks or meals. Avoid having them eat while toddling around. Once they can feed themselves be sure to bring any activities you plan to do into the kitchen, while they're eating.

They're not ready for:

- Unpasteurized cheese or milk. It can contain harmful bacteria and viruses. It may lead to food borne illness or more serious health problems.
- Honey. It may contain spores of *Clostridium botulinum*. The spores can grow into bacteria that can lead to foodborne illness called botulism. For children, under the age of one, these bacteria can be deadly.
- Cow's Milk, especially low-fat or fat-free. If you are no longer breastfeeding, wait until the age of one for cow's milk and be sure it's whole milk, not reduced fat. It is very important for infants to have whole milk as this is a needed source of fat for their rapid growth and development. Before the age of one their kidneys aren't mature enough to handle cow's milk. After the age of 2, children can drink reduced fat milk (1% or skim).
- Caution: Goats milk is lower in folate, iron, vitamin C and vitamin D, which are needed nutrients for your growing baby.
- Too much juice. It should not take the place of needed breast milk or formula which contains many nutrients the baby needs to grow and thrive. If juice is provided, it must be in infants over the age of 6 months. Never give more than 2 to 4 ounces of juice at one time and limit juice to 6 ounces per day at most.

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- Fluid outside of breast milk or formula. Speak to your child's pediatrician about when additional fluids would be needed. Breast milk or formula usually provides adequate fluid. In hot climates, small amounts of additional fluid may be needed up to 4 ounces.

Dealing with Left Overs

- If you use baby food from a jar, wash the jars and re-use them when feeding. Take half of the food out of the new jar and place it in the recycled jar to feed your baby. Place the untouched baby food back in the refrigerator with a tightly closed lid.
- If you do feed your baby out of the jar, the baby's saliva may contaminate the food and should be discarded.
- To avoid wasting food, use slightly less than you anticipate he or she will eat, then add more as he starts to finish his meal.

*Infants with a strong family history of food allergy should be breastfed as long as possible and should not be introduced to solids until 6 months. The introduction of the major food allergens which are associated with "lifelong sensitization" such as peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish should be delayed well after the first year of life as late as 3 years of age.

Melissa Halas-Liang, MA, RD, CDE, is a Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator with a Masters in Nutrition Education. She is founder of SuperKids Nutrition, Inc where she is "saving the world, one healthy food at a time." Read more about her experience as a Registered Dietitian on the services page.

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